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PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #3896/01 3490959  
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P 140959Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0832  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0764

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003896

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/2028

TAGS: PREL UNSC IZ

SUBJECT: VP MAHDI PRAISES POLITICAL BLOCS FOR OVERCOMING DIFFERENCES BUT CRITICIZES PRIME MINISTER FOR FAILURE TO CONSULT

REF: A: BAGHDAD 2280

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Robert S. Ford for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) U.S. Representative to the United Nations Zalmay Khalilzad on December 1 reported to Iraqi Vice President Adil Abd al-Mahdi that Iraq must request a new United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution to protect its financial assets. Mahdi characterized the post-SoFA political environment as positive, and said that the debate demonstrated that Iraq's political blocs could overcome their differences and achieve compromise. However, he bluntly criticized Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki for overstepping his authority and failing to consult other political leaders. Mahdi predicted that Maliki's Da'wa party would do well in the upcoming provincial elections, and warned that his Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) must remain allied with the Kurds or Iraq will lose its direction. End Summary.

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Quick Action Needed in UN to Protect DFI  
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¶2. (C) Ambassador Khalilzad on December 1 told Vice President Adil Abd al-Mahdi that the U.S. was committed to helping Iraq revise its status under Chapter VII of the United Nation's Charter and resolve issues related to the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI). Khalilzad urged Iraq to quickly submit a new, narrowly-focused resolution to the UN Security Council and explain Iraq's financial position to member countries. Mahdi asked how Iraq could at the same time be removed from Chapter VII while remaining protected under it. Khalilzad explained that under a new resolution, the U.S. military presence will no longer be covered by Chapter VII -- a positive development -- but the DFI assists would. Mahdi said he would engage with UNSC members, especially Russia, to present Iraq's case.

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Positive Post-SoFA Environment, Focus on Implementation  
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¶3. (C) VP Mahdi said last month's intense SoFA debate was positive for Iraq because it proved that political blocs could eventually compromise on a solution, even though the SoFA exposed real differences among political parties. Mahdi said the SoFA would not have passed without Tawafiq and Iraqiyyah, because those against the agreement would have been able to deny quorum. (Note. Mahdi estimated that of the 149 votes for the agreement, Tawafiq delivered about 25 and Iraqiyyah 10. End Note.) Mahdi also praised the mediating role of President Jalal Talabani and hoped that members of parliament would continue to work together to

implement the agreement. Ambassador Crocker emphasized that we must now stand-up U.S.-Iraq implementing committees for the SoFA and accompanying Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA).

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VP Mahdi Criticizes PM Maliki  
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¶4. (C) Unprompted, Mahdi complained about Prime Minister Maliki's governing style, citing his growing reluctance to consult other Iraqi leaders and tendency to overstep his authority. Mahdi claimed that President Talabani and Vice President Hashimi are also concerned about Maliki overstepping his bounds and hinted that Maliki must change his ways if he wants to remain Prime Minister. Mahdi urged the U.S. to engage other Iraqis, not just the Prime Minister's Office, when working with the Iraqi government.

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VP on Broad Political Trends  
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¶5. (C) Responding to Khalilzad's question about provincial elections, Mahdi said Da'wa has gained ground in the south since 2005, the Sadrists have lost ground, and ISCI will do "well." Over the past year, the Kurds have moderated their views on the contentious issues of Kirkuk and disputed boundaries, and are showing an increasingly willingness to "be Iraqis," Mahdi said. Mahdi warned that ISCI must maintain an alliance with the Kurd or else Iraq will "lose direction," like what happened with the "July 22 bloc"

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regarding provincial elections legislation (ref A).  
CROCKER